

NOHORA INÉS CARVAJAL SÁNCHEZ

PRODUCTION OF BOGOTAN PUBLIC SPACE, SOCIO-SPATIAL
SEGREGATION IN THE PERIMETER-URBAN ZONE ⁱ

Abstract - Bogotan space reflects the visions and interests of the different players constructing it. The main issue of this article deals with the construction of Bogotá's peri-urban spaces, mainly in relation to the logic of socio-spatial segregation. The analysis is centered on specific cases of the Usme, Bosa and Suba locations.

Both the segregation spaces and the poor have been settling in Bogotá's periphery, a tendency that is enhanced by socio-economic stratification, an instrument used mainly to charge differential rates for public utilities, which has become an internal segregation mechanism.

The general focus to deal with this issue is based on research about local initiatives as territorial development dynamics in Bogotá's peri-urban zone. Within the project's frame, three young researchers from the Geographic and Environmental Engineering Program, under the author's tutoring, developed their projects, from which some aspects are used for this article ⁱⁱⁱ.

The methodology used is qualitative whereby fieldwork is an essential element. One of the key concepts refers to peri-urban zones of the large Latin American metropolises such as Bogotá, zones that are characterized by a territorial recomposing which, according to Davis (2007), is the outcome of the meeting between the rural and the urban, where a dense network of interactions joins the large urban nodes to their neighboring regions. In these zones large investments in public and private capital are made, but there are also actions taken by the inhabitants through collective vindications which are consolidated by the community organizing itself as groups.

Another important concept for this work is the socio-spatial segregation related to the concept of frontier. According to Lampis (2002) in Bogotá there are two frontiers: one has to do with the differentiated access to economic resources; that is, one portion of the population moves along the world-wise economy of abundance, whereas the other large portion is made up of

the excluded ones, who can be found within informal economy. The second frontier is determined by the fear of those who inhabit luxurious homes and segregate themselves because of their fear of robbery, kidnapping, and extortion.

Key words: peri-urban, segregation, Usme, Bosa, Suba, Bogotá.

1. Introduction - Presently we can verify that because of the dynamics of a new capitalist regime that pushes up exacerbated competition worldwide, a growing number of persons lose their status or are not able to reach it (Castel, 2008). In the face of the challenge generated by competition in a globalized world, local organizations have decided to take action. The organized process to fight for the construction of their territory becomes a bet by some organizations located in Bogotá's peri-urban zone. Nonetheless, in the production of Bogotan space wide inequalities may be observed in terms of socio-spatial segregation.

From this perspective, this text comprises four parts. The first is centered upon general considerations about the peri-urban space. The second shows some theoretical considerations about segregation and its relation to the concepts of fear, frontier, and exclusion, among others. In the third section, the Bogotan peri-urban dynamics are seen in detail, which we have tried to describe as of the observations made in the field as well as through the theoretical contributions on these issues. We end with conclusions about the peri-urban aspect and its constitutive elements.

2. The peri-urban a source of analysis for the understanding of territorial transformations - The peri-urban is a territory being consolidated, quite unstable as to the constitution of social networks and with a great heterogeneity as regards the uses of the land. This zone has been described with different denominations: urban periphery, the rur-urban (rural-urban), the diffuse city, the country-city frontier, the disperse city, borderline territories, urban/peri-urban border, the city's contour, extra-radio, ex.urbia, among others. To sum up, it is not country, it is not city (Barsky, 2005)

The main focuses on the peri-urban, carried out in the last years, deal about matters of knowledge and action on these territories. Some consider the set of transformations tied up to

the socio-economic dynamics that recompose the geographic reality of peri-urban spaces; others reflect upon the management and regulation systems to be invented for these territories (Louddiyi, 2008).

Peri-urban spaces represent a most important source for the analysis and understanding of the main transformations of contemporary society, whose challenges are complex. Regarding this aspect, our research is centered on understanding the Usme, Bosa, and Suba peri-urban spaces, locations that are part of Bogotá, the District Capital of Colombia (see map 1), by means of the integration of the two focuses mentioned earlier. That is, we reflect upon the spatial transformations of the Bogotan peri-urban and its relation to segregation, but we also study the role social organizations play, within local governing, for territorial construction.

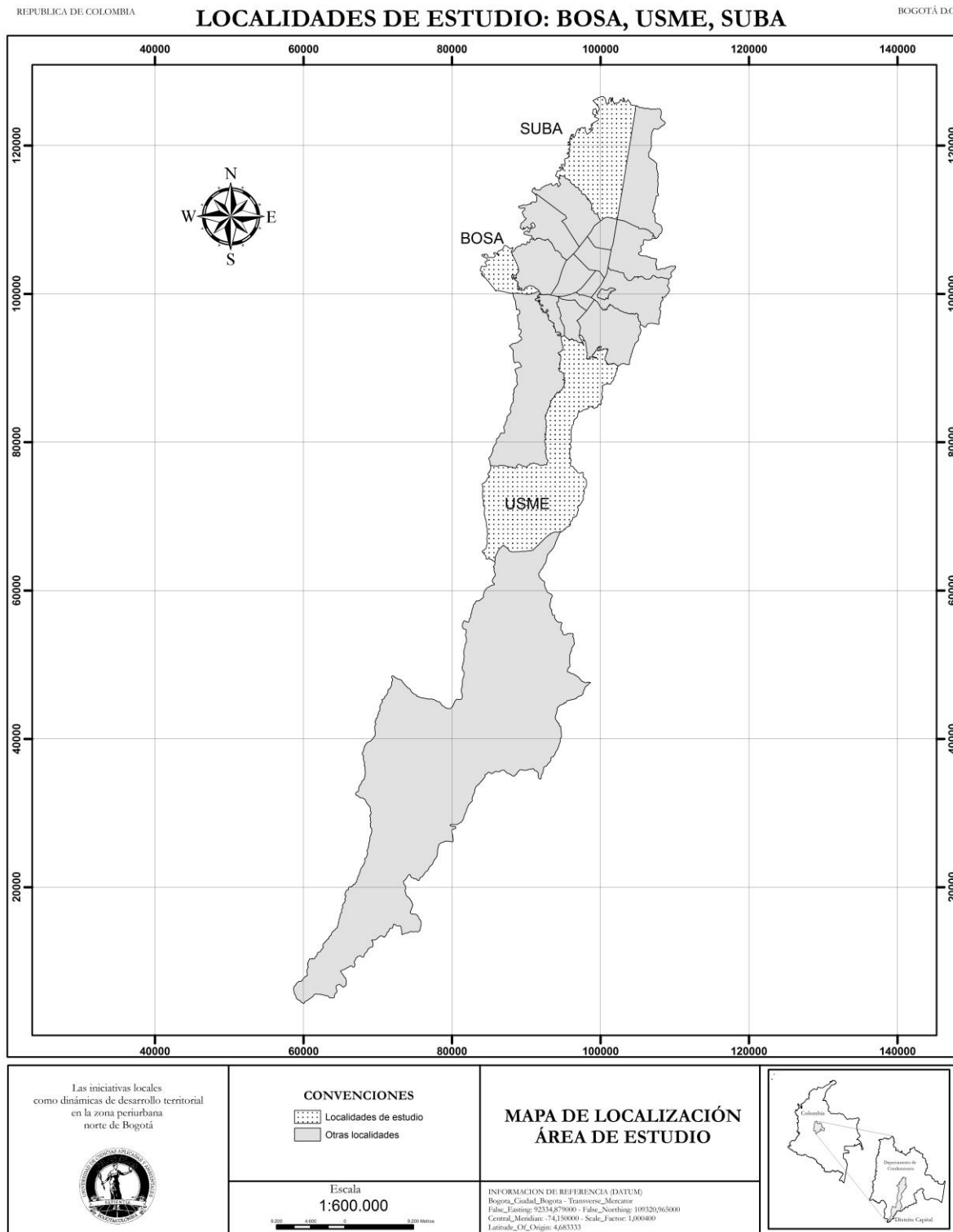


Fig. 1 - Locations subject of study: Bosa, Usme, Suba

In Usme, we concentrated on observing the relation between the exploitation of a quarry for the extraction of materials especially for construction, and the differentiated bond created with it by two neighboring hoods, Arizona and Olivares. For Bosa, located in the southwest nearby the limits of the Soacha municipality, we refer to the endogenous development of strategies set by the inhabitants located in the area of influence of the Tibanica marsh. Specifically in La Esperanza de Tibanica and Manzanares neighborhoods, and the tendency in the process of consolidation of the uses of the soil in the San Bernardino XV neighborhood. In Suba we studied local initiatives as dynamics for territorial development in Bogotá's northern peri-urban zone.

3. Segregation and its relation to the concepts of order, class dispersion, fear, frontiers, exclusion, and socio-economic strata - Segregation is not new nor is it part of contemporary society only. Rama (1984) by analyzing the meaning of the word *order* explains the design of the Latin American cities. The three major institutional structures – church, army, and government management – were the ones that developed this order. It was a circular design, and it revealed the hierarchical order that placed power in the central point, and it distributed it through concentric circles surrounding the diverse social strata. The principle underlying such distribution is the transmissions regime, that is, from the higher to the lower through the social structure, and which has an imprint on the city's physical conformation so that the distribution of urban space guarantees and preserves the social form.

In Bogotá's middle of last century we find class dispersion, a characteristic of Latin American cities, thus called by Romero (1999) to point out a characteristic of the cities with a fractured society. In Bogotá's case, Romero refers to the Chapinero and Chicó neighborhoods, whose inhabitants were seeking exclusivity and thus they created an upper-class ghetto with their own conventions and norms, ever worried by the showing up of an intruder. But Romero, in addition, refers to those who did not belong to such an elite, like those inhabiting the suburban zones, who are called differently: *callampas* in Chile, *villas miseria* in Argentina, *barriadas* in Perú, *favelas* in Brazil, *ciudades perdidas* in México, or *barrios piratas* in Colombia. That is, spatially-wise, in the city a dispersion of social classes is conformed.

More recent works such as Calderón's (2000), center on the study of urban segregation as related to the new concept of residence based on images of safety, separation, homogeneity, and easy access to utilities. In his study about Sao Paulo, Caldera states that these new images reinforce exclusion. This tendency can be seen reflected in Bogotá, where the putting up of walls, barriers, armed guards, and sophisticated surveillance technology generate a sharp contrast between luxurious neighborhoods and poor ones.

With large cities becoming metropolises fear arises, another concept related to segregation. For Borja (2008), the city turned into a metropolis apparently promises to equalize all its inhabitants regarding their rights and duties, that is in the opportunity for work, education, mobility, and a better relationship between persons; however, there are quite strong dynamics which go the opposite way, such as fear for example. One of these fears is to live in urban areas without specific boundaries, a strip that is similar to the large cities' peri-urban zones. Fear encompasses lacking the certainty as to housing, integration, safe environs for coexistence, and the fear of others. The latter one generates segregation processes seeking that some demographical groups distinguish each other from others and protect themselves.

Castells (2012) explains fear within the context of the social movements of the XXI Century. Based on Neuman's (2007) theory of affective intelligence in political communication, he states that the unchaining of fear is rage, and the latter increases with the perception of an unfair act and with the identification of the agent responsible for such an act. Fear is overcome by sharing it and identifying yourself with others in the communicative action process. Connected individuals, once fear is overcome, transform themselves into a conscious collective player. In this way social change is the outcome of communicative action that implies communication between networks. This idea is useful for us to explain the role of social organizations in the construction of peri-urban spaces.

On the other hand, within the context of global economy Lampis (2003) shows the relation between segregation and the concept of frontier. In his observations about Bogotá he states that two frontiers crisscross the city. The first one deals with the differentiated access to economic resources; that is, one portion of the population moves within the global economy of abundance, while the other large portion is made up of the excluded ones who are found

within informal economy. The second frontier is determined by fear by those living in luxurious homes and who self-segregate themselves because of their fear of robbery, kidnapping, and extortion, which we mentioned earlier. According to our observations, at a neighborhood's level, in addition to the latter ones, there exists another type of frontier that appears in the peri-urban sectors of Bogotá's south: the invisible frontiers set up by juvenile gangs that mark up their territory.

The differentiated access to economic resources is dealt with by Florida (2002) at a global scale. The power of the concentration force is the one that permits that some territories become more productive than others and, thus, engines for economic growth. For Florida, the main economic factors are talent, innovation, and creativity; and they are not distributed uniformly in the global economy which facilitates segregation processes at this scale.

Another concept related to segregation is exclusion. According to Castels (1995), it may be admitted that contemporary exclusion refers mostly to situations that translate themselves into degradation regarding a previous position. This can be seen in the fact that many integrated people become vulnerable due to the precariousness of their work relations. Nonetheless, he adds that "be it partial, definite or provisional exclusion – in the strict sense of the word – it is the outcome of official procedures, and it represents a true statute. It is a negative way that obeys certain rules of construction" (Castels 1995:19). This to point out that the reflection upon exclusion ought to pay greater attention to the metaphor about the different zones of social life used to show that some categories of the population are deprived of a certain amount of social goods, and that they are threatened to fall into an even more degraded standing.

In the Colombia case, it is relevant to point out how the socioeconomic infrastructure has become an endogenous mechanism for segregation. Socioeconomic stratification is a technical instrument that permits to classify the country's population through the households and their surroundings in different strata or socioeconomic groups. It is done mainly to charge for home public utilities with differentiated rates according to stratum, and to grant subsidies in this area (National Colombian Administrative Department of Statistics, 2014). Still, this stratification overcame the issue of the payment for public utilities to become part of other fields that make

the population identify themselves as belonging to a specific stratum due to not only economic characteristics but also cultural and social ones. That is, the stratum is identified with the environs surrounding where a person lives, which supposes homogeneity as to spatial characteristics.

According to the United Nations Program for Development (2008:35) “even though all cities in the world show some level of segregation, in Bogotá the socioeconomic distance is too big. Segregation and the poor have been settling in the periphery, a tendency fostered by stratification.” Spatially, the more marked difference can be observed between the ever poorer south with all sorts of problems and the city’s modern and prosperous north.

4. The Bogotan peri-urban dynamics: Usme, Bosa, and Suba - As pointed out above, two fundamental aspects were observed: the spatial transformations of the Bogotan peri-urban as regards to segregation, and the role of social organizations in the construction of the peri-urban. The evidences are shown below.

In the Usme case, there is a spatial differentiation in the construction of the Olivares and Arizona neighborhoods as of the opening of the Industrias Gresqui quarry. At the end of the 80s the Olivares and Arizona hoods began to take shape. Olivares started, mostly, with inhabitants coming from Armero (Tolima department) after the catastrophe due to the eruption of the Ruiz Volcano, when more than 80% of its population died.

Once the quarry started working, the two neighborhoods took up opposing standpoints. In Arizona’s case, a process takes place whereby the community carries out different activities aiming to respect the territory and avoid the ongoing deterioration due to the constant traffic of trucks transporting the material extracted from the quarry. These activities can be summarized in the closing of roads to access the quarry, prohibiting the access of the trucks since they were damaging the ways and generating cracks on their houses, the requests to the municipal administration to close down the quarry, the construction of byways and bridges to access the neighborhood, and carrying out workshops to generate environmental consciousness, led by the Arizona Communal Action Board (interview, Dec. 2013).

In an antagonist manner, at the Olivares hood the quarry is the one constructing the access byways, it helps them in the construction of the inhabitants' households, and some of the residents work for Industrias Gresqui (Olivares Communal Action Board, interview, Dec. 2013).

The quarry has brought with it severe social and environmental impacts, noise as the results of night and early morning work, disturbing the inhabitants' rest, lack of safety systems in a place where, less than 300 meters from the quarry there is a children's playground, loss of the vegetation cover, mostly native vegetation, and erosion. (See images of the use of soil, 1987 and 2013)

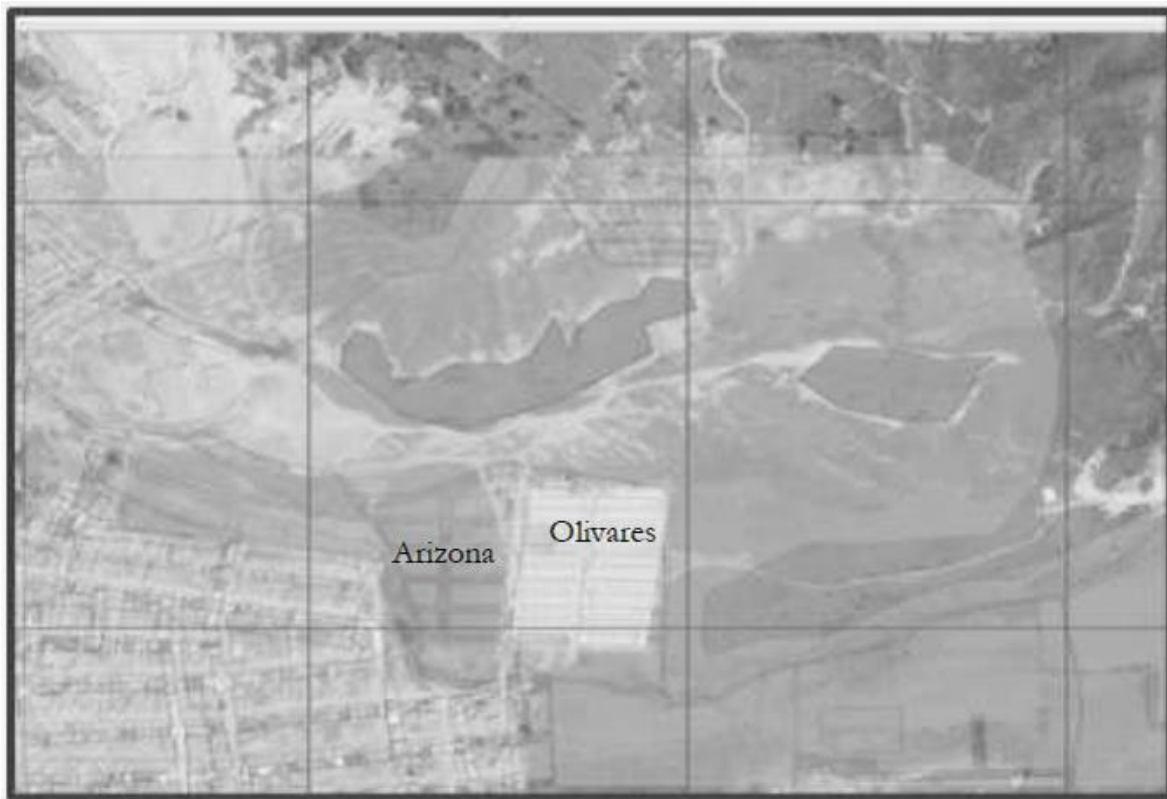


Fig. 2. Use of soil, 1987

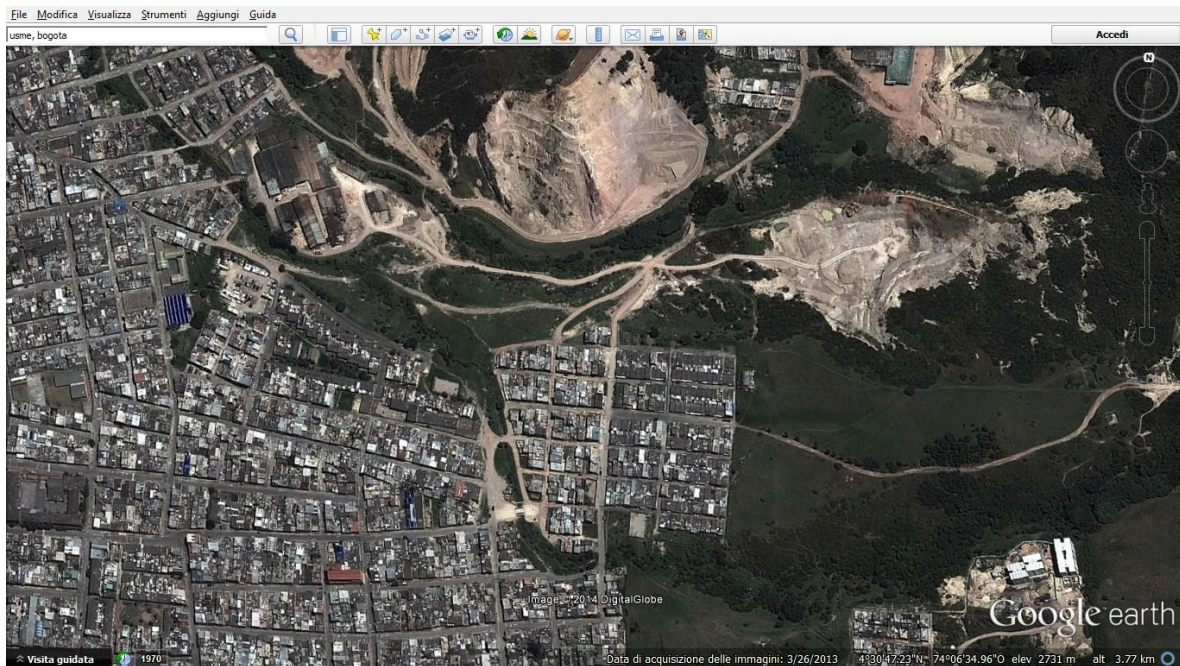


Fig. 3. Use of soil, 2013

In Bosa we refer, firstly, to the influence zone of the Tibanica marsh located between Bosa and the Soacha municipality, specifically La Esperanza and Manzanares neighborhoods. Most of their inhabitants have lived there for less than 20 years.

The marsh, which was part of the Tunjuelo river hydrographic basin, is presently totally isolated from this system. Closer to it is the Tibanica brook which used to be the main source of water supply and now has been turned into a drainage canal severely contaminated by industrial and domestic detritus from the Soacha municipality (Olivera, 2004).

The land environs of the Tibanica marsh is totally degraded as the result of the transformation of the vegetation cover and the incompatibility as regards the use of the land thus contributing to the detriment of the aquatic environment, that is, to the increase of the susceptibility of losing lands, reticular erosion, and flooding due to the lack of absorption of humidity excess during the rainy season, generating at the same time a threat due to floods.

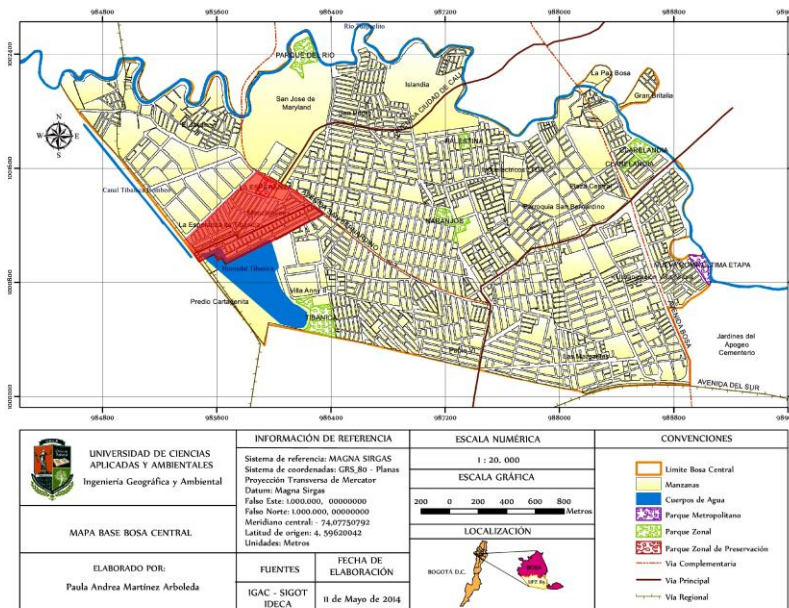


Fig. 4. Esperanza de Tibanica and Manzanares neighborhoods

The Manzanares neighborhood, located in the marsh's influence area, is under the threat of flooding and, besides its being affected by the construction of the extension of the Avenida Ciudad de Cali highway, it is subject to the land expropriation process.

On the other hand, in spite of the fact that both the Tibanica marsh and the Tunjuelito river hydrological basin are ecological spaces that are part of the protected land of Bogotá's Capital District, as well as under the restriction to build in these areas, since they are a threat and risk, inhabitants do not take these characteristics under consideration when settling in this sector.

The main environmental and social problems recorded in the field work are the zone's insecurity due in part to some subnormal settlements located in the marsh's area. For this reason most of the inhabitants do not have a sense of belonging to the ecosystem since for them it is a danger zone, in addition to the deterioration, alteration and contamination of the hydric system; weakness in the organization and sensitization processes as regards the marsh; lack of adequate conditions that permit the access to recreation and environmental education; lack of administration in force for the care and maintenance of the system; storage of swage from the Tunjuelito and Bogotá rivers and the Tibanica canal; fires recorded in 2012 that

resulted in the loss of different fauna and flora species native to the marsh; abundance of stray dogs that finish up with the species that presently live within the system.

If we consider the criteria proposed by Ortiz (2010) for the identification and evaluation of the strategies for endogenous development: participation of the social players and promotion of democracy as a necessary value; the existence of an interest in the sustainable use of a resource; design of an information, environmental monitoring and diffusion system; planning of goals, objectives, and mission; project education and internalizing; support to institutionalism; going from economic rationality to environmental rationality; generation of evaluation and feedback mechanisms; and verification of technology we are able to understand the role played by the Communal Action Boards as well as by the institutions that are part of these boards.

The Communal Action Boards fulfill a most important role in directing the strategies for local development. The proposals set by the Boards in the two neighborhoods are centered on education, training of youths under the influence of psychoactive substances, employment and housing, leaving aside the problems dealing with the marsh, whereas the participation of the institutions, among them Bogotá's Aqueduct (EAAB for its Spanish acronym), the Local Bosa Town Hall, and Bogotá's Botanic Garden is aimed at the recovery and monitoring of the said marsh.



Fig. 5. Tibanica marsh, photograph by Paula Martínez, 2014.



Fig. 6. Bosa peri-urban zone, photograph by Sebastián Úsaga, 2014.

Regarding the San Bernardino neighborhood, also located in Bosa, the transformation process for the use of the land in the first two decades of this century shows the advancement of the urbanization towards rural areas, whose relicts show small vegetable crops and small-scale cattle raising.

In spite of the fact that the norms, especially the ones regarding territorial ordering (Article 1 of Decree 469 of 2003) had foreseen the control of urban expansion processes in Bogotá, the neighborhood grew in a marshes' zone. The most recent decree by which urban norms of Bogotá's territorial ordering are exceptionally amended (Decree 364 of 2013) stipulates that the San Bernardino neighborhood is fully an urban zone. The accelerated change in the use of the land, from rural to urban, shows that the norm more than exerting control over certain processes must adequate itself to reality.

To end, in Suba, the location at the north of Bogotá, transformation of the peri-urban in the last years is far more complex. Pressure for the territory is due to Bogotá's progressive increase towards the specialization in the rendering of services, which has incentivized the consolidation of schools and universities in a country-like environs, sports fields, and social clubs headquarters, among others. Another important change deals with the need for a different type of living accommodations; many rural zones have been taken up by housing for mid and low strata, but others have built country homes that seek to take advantage of the city within rural environs.

The Native Suba Collective is a youth organization that aims to construct their territory taking into account historical, environmental, cultural, social, and political elements through the organization and community work. To do so they design strategies; among these: seminars, such as "Memories of the organization and popular fight in Bogotá," where networking with other collectives is important. Communicative action can be seen reflected also on other type of activities such as the Let's Roll Around Suba Program, which consists of trekking or biking through urban and rural sectors to know about their problems and environmental values. The integration of cultural elements to ponder about the territory is reflected, for example, on the carrying out of the "Eco-novena"^{iv} where discussions are held regarding the relations between

nature and every-day life, and the commitment is made to protect the ecosystems that still exist in the area.



Fig. 7. Poster Invitation by the Native Suba Collective to a neighborhood forum.

According to Borja (2008) today's youths do not repeat nor do they assume the patterns inherited from adults and have a stronger presence in the public space than at other times. The Suba Nativa Collective through different and novel strategies displays such characteristics, depicting the difference from previous cases where the Communal Action Board (JAC for its Spanish acronym) have a great importance. The JAC is the social organization with higher coverage and roots in Colombia where an ordinary citizen has the opportunity to look for an alternative to solve the problems the community has.

Conclusion - The peri-urban is made up of generic elements that compose and recompose it, such as the constant urban pressure and diversified social practices, and which are strongly tied to the multi-scalar pattern, usage mutations, the territory's multi-functionality, the increase of worries related to the system's sustainability, and the diversity of players as well as the integration of new interests (Bryant et al, 2008).

In the composition of Bogotan space it can be seen that the principle of transmissions regime observed by Rama (1984) is still applied in order to impose an urban order characterized by socio-spatial segregation. Whereas high socio-economic strata take up Bogotá's northern and northeastern zone, the southern, southwestern, and western peripheries are still getting the poorest population. At the same time, the former move within the global economy of abundance while the latter are mostly to be found within the informal economy.

Urban pressure does not only affect the peri-urban zones but also leads to the taking of place of several events. In Usme the proliferation of quarries is the outcome, among other aspects, of Bogotá's demand for construction materials. Whereas in Bosa spaces whose use should be for protection, have been utilized as informal or low-quality formal housing facilities. This function of the peri-urban got strengthened thanks to the difference in the cost of the land thus creating spaces for higher segregation than the ones shown in social interest housing located in the southern, southwestern and western peripheries and, simultaneously, than the upper-class social groups located up north seeking a typical low-density suburban model.

The great diversity of players in the peri-urban show us that new interests arise, among others of the youths who are looking for their identity in their territory. The Suba Nativa Collective's proposals express a conscious collective player who, through new patterns and strategies, is present in the public scene to show that their proposals are also valid.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ARIAS F., *Con total desprecio de todo lo terreno. El contexto de producción de la Novena para el Aguinaldo*, en “Historia crítica”, Bogotá, 2013, 50, pp. 37-57.

BARSKY A. *El periurbano productivo, un espacio en constante transformación. Introducción al estado del debate, con referencias al caso de Buenos Aires*, en “Scripta Nova”, 2005, vol. IX, 194 (36), (Retrieved from <http://www.ub.es/geocrit/sn/sn-194-36.htm>).

BORJA J., *Miedos, segregación y mercado en la ciudad globalizada*, en “Nueva Sociedad”, 2008, 213, pp. 25-34.

BRYANT C. et al, *Territoires périurbains et gouvernance. Perspectives de recherche*, Montréal, Laboratoire Développement durable et dynamique territoriale, Département de Géographie, Université de Montréal, 2008.

CALDEIRA T., *Fortified Enclaves: The New Urban Segregation*, en J. HOLSTON (Ed), *Cities and Citizenship*, Duke University Press, 2000, pp. 114-138.

CASTEL R., *La citoyenneté sociale menacée*, en « Cités », 2008, 35, pp. 133-141.

CASTEL R., *Les pièges de l'exclusion* en « Lien social et politiques », 1995, 34, pp. 13-21.

CASTELL M., *Redes de indignación y esperanza. Los movimientos sociales en la era de Internet*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 2012.

DAVIS M. *Le pire des mondes possibles: de l'explosion urbaine au bidonville global*, Paris, La Découverte, 2007.

DEPARTAMENTO ADMINISTRATIVO NACIONAL DE ESTADÍSTICA, *Estratificación socioeconómica para servicios públicos domiciliarios*, (Retrieved from <http://www.dane.gov.co/index.php/estratificacion-socioeconomica/generalidades>).

FLORIDA R. *The rise of the creative class*, New York, Basic Books, 2002.

LAMPIS A., *Fronteras urbanas: Bogotá entre accesos y encierros*, en GARCÍA C.I. (Comp.), *Fronteras: territorios y metáforas*, Medellín, INER Universidad de Antioquia, 2003, pp. 199-221.

NEUMAN R. et al (eds.), *The Affect Effect: Dynamics of Emotion in Political Thinking and Behavior*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2007.

OLIVERA M., *Historia de los Humedales de Bogotá*, Departamento Técnico Administrativo Medio Ambiente, Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá, D.C., 2004.

ORTIZ C e INFANTE Z. *La presencia de la sustentabilidad en las estrategias de desarrollo endógeno: notas iniciales para su análisis*. Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, coordinación de innovación educativa, 2010, (Retrieved from http://dieumsnh.qfb.umich.mx/la_presencia.htm).

PROGRAMA DE NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL DESARROLLO, *Bogotá una apuesta por Colombia: Informe de Desarrollo Humano 2008*. (Retrieved from <http://www.pnud.org.co/sitio.shtml>).

RAMA Á. *La ciudad letrada*. Hanover, Ediciones del norte, 1984.

ROMERO J.L. *Latinoamérica: las ciudades y las ideas*. Medellín, Editorial Universidad de Antioquia, 1999.

ⁱ This article is based on the research project Local Initiatives as Dynamics for Territorial Development in Bogotá's Peri-urban Zones, drafted by the author presently, as part of research work in the Geographic and Environmental Program of the Universidad de Ciencias Aplicadas Ambientales (U.D.C.A. for its Spanish acronym), at Bogotá, Colombia; email: nocarvajal@udca.edu.co

ⁱⁱ Ph.D. in Geography from l'Université de Montréal; Magister in Geography with emphasis on territorial ordering from Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia through an agreement with Instituto Geográfico Agustín Codazzi; Sociologist from Universidad Nacional. email: nohoracarvajal@yahoo.com

ⁱⁱⁱ The projects are: 1) Endogenous development strategies implemented in the Bosa location in the area of influence of the Tibanica marsh, done by Paula Andrea Martínez-Arboleda; 1) Initiatives for local development generated as of part of the change in the use of the land due to quarry exploitation in the Usme location, done by Paula Andrea Rayo-Beltrán; and 3) Analysis of the consolidation of the use of land in Bogotá's peri-urban zone, San Bernardino neighborhood case, Bosa location, done by Juan Sebastián Úsuga-Jaramillo.

^{iv} In Colombia, each December the novena navideña takes place. According to Arias (2013) under Catholic tradition, it is a devotional practice that takes place for nine days in order to obtain a favor or a special grace from God. This practice which goes back to the origins of Christianity itself takes place in Colombia, during which time friends, family and generations of grandparents, parents, children and grandchildren gather around the Nativity scene. In this case, the Suba Nueva Collective gives it an environmental focus through the Eco-novena.

Universidad de Ciencias Aplicadas y Ambientales, Bogotá, Programa Ingeniería
Geográfica y Ambiental

nohoracarvajal@yahoo.com